

CF

## CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 through 10 (canceled)

1           11. (Currently amended) A method for preparing a stable  
2          $\alpha$ -aluminum oxide protective layer for (i) an aluminum-containing  
3         alloy foil Fe-Al or Ni-Al having a thickness of 0.003 to 0.1 mm and  
4         an Al content of at least [[about]] 8% by weight or for (ii) an  
5         aluminum-containing alloy foil Fe-Cr-Al or Ni-Cr-Al having a  
6         thickness of 0.003 to 0.1 mm and an Al content of at least  
7         [[about]] 3% by weight, the method comprising the steps of:

8                 (a) depositing Ni, Fe, Cr or Ti on the surface of the  
9         aluminum-containing alloy foil (i) or (ii) in an oxygen atmosphere  
10         to form on the aluminum-containing alloy foil, an oxide layer of a  
11         non-aluminum-containing oxide having a thickness of up to 1000 nm  
12         effective to suppress formation of metastable forms of aluminum  
13         oxide; and

14                 (b) heating the aluminum-containing alloy foil (i) or  
15         (ii) on which is formed an oxide layer of a non-aluminum-containing  
16         oxide to a temperature of at least 800° C, whereby the oxide layer  
17         of the non-aluminum-containing oxide acts on the surface of the  
18         aluminum-containing alloy foil (i) or (ii) as a nucleating agent to  
19         promote formation of the stable  $\alpha$ -aluminum oxide while suppressing  
20         formation of metastable forms of aluminum oxide.